

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

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FOLLOWING MSG BOMBAY 2371 DTD 16 SEP 75 RECVD NEW DELHI BEING
REPEATED YOU

QUOTE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT IN

SUBJ: GOM MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE SHARAD PAWAR ON ELECTIONS

1. DURING CALL WITH DEPTOFF BAZIL W. BROWN SEPTEMBER 15,
GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE SHARAD PAWAR
INFORMED US HE DOES NOT RPT NOT EXPECT MRS GANDHI TO HOLD
ELECTIONS ON SCHEDULE IN EARLY 1976. PAWAR EXHECTS ELECTIONS
TO BE POSTPONED AT LEAST ONCE FOR SIX MONTHS AND POSSIBLY
POSTPONED A SECOND SIX MONTHS, WHICH WOULD MEAN THEY WOULD NOT
BE HELD UNTIL EARLY 1977. HE ACTUALLY SEEMED TO FEEL THE DOUBLE
POSTPONEMENT IS MORE LIKELY, POINTING OUT THAT STATE AND
NATIONAL ELECTIONS WOULD THEN BE HELD AT THE SAME TIME.

2. PAWAR STATED FRANKLY THAT HE HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN PLANNING FOR
PREVIOUS ELECTIONS AND WOULD BE INVOLVED IN PLANNING FOR ANY
FUTURE ELECTIONS. HEQ STATED EMPHATICALLY THAT HE SEES NO SIGNS THAT
ELECTIONS ARE PLANNED, AND HE DISAGREES ENTIRELY WITH
COLLEAGUES IN DELHI AND ELSEWHERE WHO SEEM TO THINK MRS
GANDHI IS PLANNING TO CALL ELECTIONS WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL

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MONTHS. IT IS NOT EASY TO HOLD ELECTIONS IN THIS VAST COUNTRY,

HE SAID, AND SNAP ELECTIONS ARE JUST NOT POSSIBLE. IN THE PAST, THE CONGRESS HAS STARTED PLANNING ONE-AND-A-HALF TO TWO YEARS AHEAD OF TIME, AND THERE IS JUST NO REASON TO BELIEVE ELECTIONS ARE TO BE HELD WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS. AS AN INDICATION THAT NO PLANS ARE UNDERWAY, PAWAR STATED THAT THE POST OF ELECTION COMMISSIONER IN MAHARASHTRA S VACANT. SURELY, HE SAID, THE POST WOULD BE FILLED IF ELECTIONS WERE NOT FAR AWAY.

3. PAWAR STATED THAT THE CONGRESS PARTY S PRESENTLY DIRECTING ITS EFFORTS TOWARD (A) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 20-POINT PLAN; (B) KEEPING PRICES DOWN; AND (C) INCREASING PRODUCTION. THIS LEAVES LITTLE TIME FOR PLANNING FOR ELECTIONS, AND, IN FACT, HE SAID, THE PARTY WOULD LIKE A RESPITE BEFORE STARTING PLANNING FOR ELECTIONS.

4. REGARDING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF SEVERAL DAYS AGO THAT MRS GANDHI HAD INSTRUCTED THAT ELECTORAL ROLLS BE REVISED, IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT ELECTORAL ROLLS ARE RETISED PERIODICALLY, WHETHER OR NOT ELECTIONS ARE IN THE OFFING. ACNORDINGLY, MRS GANDHI'S INSTRUCTIONS WOULD NOT SEEM AS SIGNIFICANT AS FIRST THOUGHT. IN AN INTERESTING COMMENT, PAWAR STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF MAHRASHTRA IS VIGOROUSLY PROSECUTING OFFENDERS FOR DEFAULTING ON COOPERATIVE LOANS OF VARIOUS KINDS AND FOR OTHER OBLIGATIONS TO THE STATE GOVERNMENT. OBVIOUSLY, HE SAID, THE GOM WOULD NOT BE DOING SO IF ELECTIONS WERE RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER.

BANE

UNQUOTE
SCHNEIDER

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